

THOUGHTS

ON THE PRESENT PERFORMANCE OF

PSALMODY

IN THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

ADDRESSED TO

THE CLERGY.

BY EDWARD MILLER, MUS. DOCT. CANTAB.



L O N D O N :

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BOOKSELLER TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

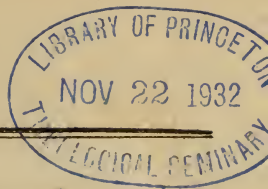
THE DUKE OF CLARENCE.

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THOUGHTS

ON THE PRESENT PERFORMANCE OF

PSALMODY.

REVEREND SIRS;

THE necessity of a reformation in the performance of Parochial Psalmody, has lately employed the pen of some eminent divines; but, as the subject is important, I hope I shall neither be accused of presumption by them nor you, for offering, with the utmost deference and respect, a few more hints for your consideration.

Should it be found that I have advanced but little that is *new* on the subject, yet even a repetition of what has already been

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said,

said, may be attended with some good consequences, as this letter may possibly be circulated among those who have never seen the other productions.

In the present age, though our *parochial* music has been neglected, yet *secular* music has never been more encouraged.

At the *opera* and *theatre*, musical performances are arrived at a pitch of excellence unknown to former times. But even when Mr. *Addison* wrote, he complained of the great encouragement given to *opera* music, while that of the *church* was neglected. “ I could heartily wish (says he) there was
 “ the same application and endeavour to
 “ cultivate and improve our church music,
 “ as have been lately bestowed upon that of
 “ the stage. Our composers have one very
 “ great incitement to it; they are sure to
 “ meet with excellent words, and at the
 “ same time a wonderful variety of them.
 “ There is no passion that is not finely ex-
 “ pressed in those parts of the inspired
 “ writings, which are proper for songs and
 “ anthems.”

“ Since

“ Since we have therefore such a treasure
 “ of words so beautiful in themselves, and
 “ so proper for the airs of music, I cannot
 “ but wonder that persons of distinction
 “ should give so little attention and encou-
 “ ragement to that kind of music which
 “ would have its foundation in reason, and
 “ which would improve our virtue in pro-
 “ portion as it raises our delight. The
 “ passions that are excited by ordinary com-
 “ positions generally flow from such silly and
 “ absurd occasions, that a man is ashamed
 “ to reflect upon them seriously: but the
 “ fear, the love, the sorrow, the indigna-
 “ tion that are awakened in the mind by
 “ hymns and anthems, make the heart bet-
 “ ter, and proceed from such causes as are
 “ altogether reasonable and praise-worthy.
 “ Pleasure and duty go hand in hand, and
 “ the greater our satisfaction is, the greater
 “ is our religion.”

“ *Music*, when thus applied, raises noble
 “ hints in the mind of the hearer, and fills
 “ it with great conceptions. It strengthens
 “ devotion, and advances praise into rap-
 “ ture.

“ ture. It lengthens out every act of wor-
 “ ship, and produces more lasting and per-
 “ manent impressions in the mind, than
 “ those which accompany any transient
 “ form of words that are uttered in the
 “ ordinary method of religious worship.”

Perhaps the excellent musicians we hear at the opera, have in some measure contributed to render the present performance of *Parochial Psalmody* so intolerable to our ears. It is not from the *melodies* or *tunes* used in our parish churches being incapable of raising the affections and melting the heart; for this power they have to a high degree, or why are we so delighted with the *same tunes*, as they are sung in the tabernacles of the *Methodists*? The reason is obvious: these people are taught to believe that singing praises to God is a part of their duty, which they are *bound* to perform. They are also more encouraged to meet frequently for private practice, to correct their pronunciation, and to sing with energy and effect.

In the performance of psalmody among the primitive Christians (says Dr. Cave)

• “ *The*

“ *The whole congregation bore a part, joining all together in a common celebration of the praises of God.*” To show how little we are influenced by their example, if any one should step into a parish church while the psalm is singing, would he not find the greater part of the congregation totally inattentive? Irreverently *sitting*--talking to each other--taking snuff--winding up their watches, or adjusting their apparel? and must he not think they entered the house of God from mere form and custom? Impelled by no religious motives, and so ignorant as not to know that it is as much their duty to join the *clerk* in *singing* the psalms, as it is their duty to join the *minister* in *reading* the psalms? Alive to the music of dances, cannot the sound of the sacred *organ* awaken them? Will they reserve their breath for the unhallowed strains of midnight *orgies*, and refuse to lift their voices to the Lord their maker? Surely no. I trust they may be brought more strongly to believe that *psalmody* is an essential part of divine worship.—That addressing our God in songs of
praise

praise and thanksgiving, is a duty we must not omit ; and that our sacred songs, equally with our prayers, will be acceptable to the Supreme Being, and tend towards the salvation of our own souls.

As it was the custom among the primitive Christians, and still is the custom in many parts of Europe and America, for *all* the congregation to join in singing the psalms ; it may not be amiss to enquire how this custom has been so generally discontinued in England.

So many people in our churches neglecting at present to join in singing the psalms, may sometimes proceed from ignorance in not knowing *all* their duty to God : but does it not generally proceed from *pride*, and the fear of appearing vulgar ? Let them search their own hearts, and with shame confess, that the *poor who can read* are their *superiors*. The *rich* should imitate the *poor* in their performance of this part of their duty.—“ *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God.*”

In country churches, the congregation
not

not joining in the psalms, may be *partly* attributed to the great indulgence given by many of the clergy to detached *sets of singers*. —The music performed by these people is too complicated and difficult for the congregation to attain by the ear, consequently they cannot join in it. Nor is this the only inconvenience for the performance of this *detached choir*, being generally as bad as the music they perform, rather tends to disgust than please the hearers*. Thus are the congregation excluded from performing an essential, and noble part of their duty. The remembrance of the tunes originally composed for them is lost; and they seem to have forgotten also, that it is their duty, for the blessings conferred upon them, to “*Praise the name of the Lord standing in the courts of the Lord’s house.*” Psal. cxxiv.

* Our parochial music (says Dr. Brown) in general is solemn and devout, much better calculated for the performance of a *whole* congregation, than if it were more broken and elaborate. In country churches, wherever a more artificial kind hath been imprudently attempted, confusion and dissonance are the general consequences.

In order to effect a reformation in the performance of parochial psalmody in *villages* where there are no organs, the method that appears most likely to be attended with success, is to engage some person who knows *notes*, or country *singing-master*, to attend one evening in the week (at the parish expence) to instruct *by the ear only* such young persons and other parishioners as may wish to learn the plain psalm tunes, to be used in the church.—*Bishop Gibson* strongly recommends this practice, in his directions to the clergy of his diocese. “And to the end (says he) “that the psalms may be sung in a more “decent manner, it is further to be wished, “that the people of every parish, and especially the youth, were trained up, and accustomed to an orderly way of singing; “since that is the proper season of forming “the voice, as well as the mind, and the “regularity in which it is then cast, with “great ease will remain with them during “life.”

If the Bishop's reasons be well founded,
the

the practice of psalmody becomes a *national concern*. The establishment of *Sunday schools* affords a finer prospect for the improvement of parochial music, than was ever before presented to us. The number of scholars in various parts of the kingdom, are supposed to amount to 300,000. The parish ministers are always trustees for these and all other charity schools; and it is needless to mention how much they must have it in their power to be of essential service towards the improvement of congregational psalmody. The *masters* of Sunday schools are never chosen but by their approbation. They might easily make choice of one or two persons who know enough of music to teach, *by the ear*, the children of their schools, the tunes that are to be used in the church.

These men might be allowed to select such children from the other schools as were found to possess musical ears, and good voices; and to those children who could not read, they should be taught in the course of the week, to get the first

verse of a psalm by heart against the ensuing Sunday. In regard to their getting the first stanza of a psalm by heart ; their attention to learn the tunes ; and procuring their constant attendance to the practices at church, it is astonishing what good effects little pecuniary rewards of a penny to each, has upon them.

It may be alledged that there are many of the clergy who do not think the cultivation of psalmody is a matter of much importance ; and, indeed, the wretched manner in which it is most commonly performed, may give them a disgust to it, but they *all* like to see their churches well filled ; and could those who are not insensible to the power of melody themselves, be brought to believe the influence which *good music* has upon others possessed of musical ears, there is no doubt but that they would exert their influence to render the performance of a noble part of our church service more decent and attractive.

The dissenters from our communion, are well aware of the efficacy of music to procure

cure them large congregations. It is well known that more people are drawn to the tabernacles of *Methodists* by their attractive harmony, than by the doctrine of their preachers. Why is this? Have their fingers better voices? No. Have they better masters than we might procure? No. Are the tunes they sing better? No. Do their ministers in general take more pains in providing them instructors, and keeping them in constant practice? Yes.

Is it not then to be lamented, that with superior advantages in our churches, where there are organs, we should pay so little attention to the instruction of youth, as to suffer, by our neglect, the performance of an important part of divine worship to become disagreeable, nay disgusting? Might not the same people, whose melody is so attractive in the tabernacles of *Methodists*, had they had the same instruction and encouragement, been still kept within the pale of the church? Surely yes. Where the *Methodists* have drawn *one* person from

our communion by their preaching, they have drawn *ten* by their music*.

Consider this, ye rulers of the church! As ministers of the gospel of Christ, ye cannot, but with pain behold part of your flock deserting their shepherd, and received into other folds. Cherish the remainder with care, and you will have no reason to complain of future wanderers.

I would not presume to deliver my sentiments thus freely, had I not the authority of the first characters in the church for abilities, piety, and virtue, to countenance me; and also a desire to induce those who seem to be indifferent in what manner the psalms are sung in their churches, to believe that a more attractive, and more decent performance of them is really a matter

* A few years since, an *organ* was erected in the parish church of *Bradford*, in the county of *York*, and by the attention of the present vicar to the improvement of *psalmody*, the congregations of the numerous dissenters in that town, and neighbourhood, are lessened; while that of the established church are increased in proportion. This information, I had from a clergyman born in the town.

sufficiently

sufficiently important to deserve their serious consideration.

Some clergymen affect to despise music, and yet tacitly acknowledge its efficacy; for, whenever they stand in need of large contributions for any charitable purpose, they have always recourse to the aid of music for supply. Could the professors of any science but music procure equal sums to those annually raised, by their talents, at St. Pauls? Raised for whom? *For the maintenance and support of the distressed widows and orphans of the clergy.* This very circumstance alone, *Reverend Sirs*, it is hoped, will induce you, *feelingly*, to own the efficacy of choral harmony; will contribute to procure your zeal for its improvement, and by your influence relieve us from the miserable jargon, under the name of music, that at present disgraces our church service.

It must be owned that there are some clergymen unfriendly to psalmody, not only from the general bad performance of it, but from the interruption they think it occasions in the service. I have heard such sentiments

timents with wonder, having been taught, from a child, to regard it as an essential part of divine worship, in which it was my duty to join. The effect of music upon devout minds, is found to exhilarate the spirits, and raise devotion; and even if singing praises to God were no part of our duty, but optional, the sermon is introduced with much better effect in being immediately preceded by a psalm.

However, we have the satisfaction to know, that far the greater part of the clergy think very differently to a few of their brethren on this subject, and will coincide in the sentiments of the learned *Bishop Sherlock*; who, after proving the great effect which sounds have on the passions, makes this inference: “ Now, if
 “ there is a natural sympathy between
 “ sounds and passions, there is no doubt
 “ but true devotional music will excite or
 “ heighten our devotional passions; as we
 “ daily see and complain, that wanton and
 “ amorous airs are apt to kindle wanton
 “ fires. For nature will act like herself,
 “ whether

“ whether we apply it to good or bad pur-
 “ poses. If there is no force in music to
 “ give a good or bad tincture to the mind,
 “ why do men complain of wanton songs?
 “ If music doth no hurt, they may blame
 “ the poet, but neither the composer, nor
 “ the singer ; but if music doth hurt, we
 “ ought certainly to turn the stream, and
 “ apply the science to that which is divine,
 “ which will have as great an influence
 “ upon a devout mind to make it better,
 “ as the other hath upon a bad one to make
 “ it worse.”

I trust enough has been said on the at-
 tractive power of music, when well per-
 formed, to induce all those concerned in
 the church, to lend their assistance towards
 promoting a reformation in the present per-
 formance of congregational psalmody. I
 will now take the liberty of repeating some
 methods, and of adding others, which, from
 experience, appear to me the best calculat-
 ed for effecting that purpose.

1st. In towns where there are organs,
 the organist or his deputy, and the clerk,
 should

should be engaged for six months to attend one evening in the week, and also half an hour every Sunday, before morning and evening prayers.

2d. The following notice might be published. That attendance will be given at the organ on a fixed day in the week, and also half an hour before morning and evening service; when it is expected that the masters and mistresses of the *Sunday* and other charity schools will attend with their children, to be instructed in properly singing the psalms to be used in this church. It is also hoped that those *parishioners* who are desirous of well performing this part of divine worship, will encourage the meetings by their appearance and assistance.

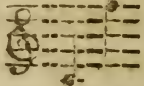
3d. In villages where there are no organs, some person who sings by note, or country singing-master, should be engaged (at the parish expence) to attend one evening in the week, to instruct by the *ear only*, such young persons and other parishioners, as may wish to learn the tunes to be sung in the church: parents should be requested

to fend their children ; and masters and mistresses, fuch of their fervants as they could spare.

4th. Where there are *Sunday schools*, the above person might be a proper master for one of them. In those towns where there are *many Sunday*, or other *charity* schools, a person with a musical ear, and good voice, should be appointed also as a master ; and the organist and he should have the choice of such children from the other schools, as might be found best suited for their purpose. Those children who cannot read, should be taught, during the course of the week, the *first stanza* of each psalm by heart, that is to be sung on the ensuing Sunday. This method would be an exercise for memory, and greatly contribute to their speedily learning the tunes. Small premiums should be given, occasionally, to those who are found to be the most diligent.

5th. Where there is no organ, the clerk or singing-master should be provided with a concert *pitch-pipe* ; and they should be

careful not to pitch the key of the tune so high, as that any note in the course of it may strain the childrens' voices. No note should be lower than D, or higher than E; or at most, the following compass should

never be exceeded; from C to F  *

Nor should the children be ever suffered to sing too *loud*, or to *force* the voice, even in notes within their compass. Great attention should also be paid to their right pronunciation of the *words* they sing; and that they properly accent those which are the most emphatical.

No *country choirs*, in parish churches, within my knowledge, make any alteration in expressing, by the tones of their voice, the difference between the *penitential psalms*, and those of *praise* and *thanksgiving*; whereas, in singing the *first*, the tones should be

* In St. Peter's, Cornhill, London, there is, or was, a concert *pitch-pipe* in the clerk's desk, which sounds by the wind it receives from a small bellows, both of which are out of sight.

Soft and plaintive, and in the *second*, more loud and animated ;—but, in regard to properly accenting the *words*—true *pronunciation*, and musical *expression*, it seems as if our *village choirs* in general were unacquainted with the very *alphabet*. In the principles of *time*—in their knowledge of the *major* and *minor* keys—in the situation of the *tones*, and *semi-tones*—in singing with readiness at *sight*, and in other essential requisites, they are almost always found to be well informed.

As the choice of a qualified *clerk* is so essentially requisite towards a decent performance of psalmody, the ninety-first *canon* of our church expressly enjoins, that they shall be persons not only “ of honest
“ conversations, but sufficient for their read-
“ ing, writing, and also for their competent
“ skill in singing ; which *canon* (says *Bishop*
“ *Gibson*) was made on purpose to guard
“ against the indecencies that parish clerks,
“ who are not duly qualified, always bring
“ into the public worship.” And again, in conformity to which *canon*, it is much to be

hoped, that as there shall be occasion, ministers (setting aside all private regards and applications) will choose such persons to be their clerks, as are known to be of honest conversation, and ability to perform the part that belongs to them, decently and laudably.

Mr. Riley, in his *parochial music corrected*, says, “ That the parish clerks have been a
 “ company about five hundred years, and
 “ were first incorporated by *King Henry the*
 “ *Third*, who distinguished them by *the title*
 “ *of the brotherhood of St. Nicholas*. They
 “ were held in great esteem, even by per-
 “ sons of the first rank, because they ex-
 “ celled in the performance of *church-music*,
 “ and made it a principal part of their
 “ study. Their charter was again renewed
 “ by *King Charles the First*, who incorpo-
 “ rated them by the name of *The Master,*
 “ *Wardens, and Fellowship of Parish Clerks of*
 “ *the city and suburbs of London, and the liber-*
 “ *ties thereof; the city of Westminster, the*
 “ *Borough of Southwark, and the fifteen out*
 “ *parishes adjacent*. This charter grants
 “ them

“ them very ample privileges, which would
 “ be of much benefit to the *company* in ge-
 “ neral, and each member in particular, did
 “ they more strictly abide by it. However,
 “ I shall only mention one, and that be-
 “ cause it exactly coincides with the *canon*
 “ relating to the choice of the parish clerks,
 “ which is much to the purpose; viz. *That*
 “ *every person who is chosen clerk of a parish,*
 “ *shall first give sufficient proof of his abilities to*
 “ *to sing, at least the tunes which are used in*
 “ *parish churches, to the master, wardens, and*
 “ *courts of assistants, of the company of parish*
 “ *clerks.*”

Though there are undoubtedly many ignorant clerks, yet I have received letters from several relative to the subject upon which I am now writing, that shew them to be well qualified for their offices; and there is no doubt but *all* of them will coincide in the necessity there is for a more decorous and interesting performance of *parochial psalmody*, and will cheerfully give their assistance to whatever methods may be found best calculated for that purpose.

There

There is one inconvenience which I have experienced from the singing children of the *Sunday* schools, all being collected in one distinct gallery; it is apt to occasion a great part of the congregation, instead of joining in the psalms, to sit silent hearers only. On asking some of them the reason why they did not sing? and observing to them that a principal motive for teaching the children was, that *their* voices might operate as a guide to the rest of the congregation, the answer was,—That they had more pleasure in listening to the children, than in singing themselves. Thus, the original intention of psalmody may be frustrated, the *chorus* weakened, and the performance of a noble part of our duty neglected. However, one good effect was produced; for the congregation, by attending to the children, soon learnt the new tunes. I remember particularly that after they had heard *twice* the tune called *Messiah*, in my book, a great part of them were enabled to join the *third* time it was used. It may appear strange, but it is true, that by
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the help of the children, the congregation learn the *new* tunes quicker; and there is much less difficulty in teaching them those, than to correct the drawling method they have been accustomed to, in singing the *old* melodies. After all, if in some churches it should be found that a great part of the congregation cannot be prevailed upon to join in the psalm, but will silently sit, having their eyes and ears directed to the singers' gallery; it were better, as soon as one set of children had learnt *all* the tunes sung in the church, to remove them into different parts of it, and have the gallery supplied by a new set. If this expedient fail of success, there should be no distinct gallery at all appropriated to the singers; but the children should take their seats in the body of the church, among those of the respective schools to which they belong. Their being taught, will nevertheless have its effect, and their singing will still operate as a guide to the rest of the congregation.

The following plan has been recommended by the *Rev. Mr. Warton*, in his
lately

lately published *Essay on Psalmody*, as a means of instruction for the congregation. “ A *singing-master* of sense and judgment, “ selected *ten* persons with good tenor “ voices, and having instructed these in a “ certain number of plain melodies, till “ they sung in *time* and *tune*; he placed “ them in different parts of the church: “ he next proceeded in the same manner, “ with basses and counter tenors. By de- “ grees the whole congregation came to “ join with them, so as to approach as near “ as possible to perfection.” I sincerely wish with the Reverend and ingenious author, that his plan could be generally adopted; but this is rather to be hoped for, than expected. I allow the possibility of its being carried into execution in a *village church*; but in large congregations, it seems impracticable. Every *musician* knows, that when he has taught a scholar, by *solmisation*, any particular voice part, how difficult it is (especially if it be an inner part) for him to keep *firm* in it, when the other parts are supplied by different voices. How much more difficult

difficult must it then be for people unacquainted with music, to sing the *counter-tenor*, or *tenor* parts ; when, perhaps, they have within a few yards of them the *trebles* in the front, and the *basses* in the rear, to distract their attention. Except in *country churches*, where the clergymen are good judges, and encouragers of music, and great labour bestowed by a well qualified *singing-master*, it seems to be in vain to expect, even by those who learn scientifically, that we should hear music in *many parts* well performed. It is to our *cathedrals* that we must commonly repair for the enjoyment of *perfect harmony*. Let us be contented in *parish churches*, with the simple, elegant, and perhaps no less attractive charms of *melody*, aided by the harmonic accompaniment of a well-tempered, but not controuling, *organ*.

But of all the impediments to a reformation in *congregational psalmody*, the greatest is yet to mention ; I mean the present use of the *old version* of the psalms, by *Sternbold* and *Hopkins*. Nothing has brought so

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much

much disgrace upon psalmody, as the use of this version. Even the accent of music becomes ridiculous, as an appendage to such nonsense. Can we proceed in the career of reformation, when we have such a stumbling block to retard our progress? Can we expect the sensible part of congregations will join in rhymes they treat with derision and contempt? No tongue will address his God in such language—no voice will utter, in such notes, his praise.

Dr. Brown, who was not only a good poet, but also a good musician, says, “ Our sacred poetry sung in our cathedrals, is transcribed strictly from the *Holy Scriptures*, and most commonly from the book of Psalms: but while we justly admire the *sacred poetry* of our cathedral service, must we not lament the state of it in our *parochial churches*, where the cold, the meagre, the disgusting *dullness* of Sernbold and his companions, hath *quenched* all the *poetic fire* and *devout majesty* of the *royal psalmist*.”

The present use of the *old version* of psalms

psalms is a grievance which calls loudly for redress. It is the wish of all judicious persons that it were abolished; yet, strange to relate! it is at present used in more than half the parish churches in the kingdom. Many clergymen, who have desired its expulsion, have nevertheless, been heard to declare, that they have not had sufficient influence on the majority of their parishioners, to effect the purpose. If so, and they are deaf to the persuasions of those whose opinion, pastoral care, and learning, should induce them to a compliance, suffer me, *Reverend Sirs*, for the *perusal of the laity*, to select such passages from the *old version*, as may convince them how improper it is to address their Maker in such ridiculous, nay, often times impious language. The sense of shame may strike them, when they are impenetrable to the most convincing arguments; and I am well assured that the meanest capacity will be shocked at the absurdity and impiety of the following stanzas.

First lines of *different psalms in the old version*, many of which are frequently *run out* by country clerks, and never fail of exciting the contempt or derision of the congregation.

Psal.	Ver.	Oxford Edition, Clarendon Press, printed 1781.
41	1	My heart doth take in <i>hand</i> .
73	8	Their life is most licentious <i>and</i>
118	39	The Lord's commands are righteous, <i>and</i>
34	11	Come near to me my children, and
27	15	I utterly should faint, <i>but that</i> .
119	33	Instruct me, Lord, in the <i>right trade</i> .
141	—	And though I be nothing <i>set by</i> .

Stanzas of different psalms in the old version.

Psal.	Ver.	Oxford Clarendon Press, 1781.
31	12	As men once dead are out of mind, So am I now forgot; As little use of me they find, As of an earthen pot.
18	41	And still like dust before the wind I drive them under feet; And sweep them out like filthy dirt, That lieth in the street.
35	17	The <i>belly gods</i> and flatt'ring train, That all good things deride; At me did <i>grin</i> with great disdain, Turning their mouths aside.

- Pfal. Ver. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1781.
- 115 4 And they have *ears* join'd to their heads,
But do not hear at all;
Noses also they formed have,
But do not *smell* withall.
- 72 4 The people that in deserts dwell,
Shall kneel to him *full thick*,
And all his foes that do rebel,
The earth and dust *shall lick*.
- Frequently chosen by ignorant clerks in time of war.
- 35 6 Let all their ways be void of light,
And flipp'ry like to fall,
And send thy angel with thy might,
To persecute them all.
- 73 7 They are *so fid*, that e'en with *fat*
Their eyes oft times out start;
And as for worldly goods they have
More than *can wish their heart*.
- 29 6 And makes them leap like as a *calf*
Or as the *unicorn*;
Not only *trees*, but mountains great
Whereon the trees are borne.
- 27 2 While that my foes with all their strength,
Began with me to *brawl*,
Thinking to *eat me up*, at length
Themselves have *caught the fall*.
- 22 12 For many *bulls* do compass me,
That be full strong of head;
Yea, *bulls so fat*, as tho' they had
In *Basonfield* been fed.

- Pfal. Ver. From older editions, but still in use.
- 59 6 At night they stir and seek about,
As hounds they *howl* and *grin* ;
And all the city, *clean* throughout,
From place to place they *run*.
- 63 5 My soul is fill'd as with *marrow*,
Which is both *fat* and *sweet* ;
My mouth therefore shall sing such songs,
As are for *thee* most meet.
- 69 9 My mother's sons, my brethren all
Forsake *me on a row*, &c.
- 69 10 Their checks and taunts at *thee* to hear
My very heart doth *grutch*, &c.
- 119 131 For joy I have both *gap'd* and *breath'd*,
To know thy commandment, &c.

Speaking of God.

- 74 12 Why dost thou draw thy hand aback,
And hide it in thy *lap* ;
Do pluck it out, and be not *slack*
To give thy foes a *rap*.

It would scarcely be supposed, that most of these passages are to be found in editions of the *old version*; printed so lately as the year 1781. Many may say, that the *stanzas* here selected from the *older*, have been altered in the *newer* editions, so as to make them

them more tolerable. This is true ; but poor people in the country are seldom in possession of these new editions. Their family bibles and prayer-books are, to many, almost the only legacy left them by their forefathers. It is a custom with me, when I go into a *village cottage*, to look into their bibles and prayer-books ; and I aver, that for *one* in which the above passages are not contained, I have met at least with *four* in which they are to be found ; even in those printed about the beginning of the present century ; and it is no uncommon thing, to hear even these *cottagers* remark, “ *That there are strange verses in some of their singing psalms!*” Should then an enlightened people suffer their poor brethren to be still enveloped in the dark night of ignorance ? should the miserable *rhymes*, and obsolete language of a groom of the chamber to *King Edward VI.* be still imposed upon us ? surely No.—That there are some fine lines in the version of *Sternhold and Hopkins*, cannot be denied ; but out of 2452 stanzas, which that version contains, per-
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haps there are not more than *four* successively good, as in the hundredth psalm ; and *two*, which are truly sublime, in the eighteenth psalm ; but the goodness of *six* stanzas is a poor equivalent for our having imposed upon us so many hundreds that are bad. It would be hard indeed, if in a *busbel of chaff*, we could not find *four* grains of wheat ; nay, it might be possible, as in the eighteenth psalm, to find also *two* diamonds.

There are other versions of the *Psalms of David*, as that of Mr. *Merrick's*, and Mr. *Christ. Smart*, which are not only allowed to have infinitely more poetical merit than that of *Sternbold* and *Hopkins*, but, by many, thought to be superior to the version of *Tate* and *Brady*. However, as only the use of those commonly known by the names of the *old* and *new* version are licensed by authority, and as few of the tunes adapted to them can be sung to the *metres* used by Mr. *Merrick* and Mr. *Smart*, it is not likely that their versions should be introduced into our churches.

The version of *Dr. Watts* has also many admirers ;

admirers ; and as he has accommodated his *metres* to our old tunes, consequently the music selected in my lately published book of psalms, may do for his version, as well as for that of Tate and Brady ; but Dr. Watts' version is not licensed by authority to be used in our churches, and it may be found difficult to persuade many congregations to admit any other psalters than those to which they are accustomed.

As we have then only the choice of one or other of the two versions in present use, surely we cannot hesitate which to choose. “ In the book of psalms,” says *Dr. Brown*, “ as verified by *Sternbold*, for the use of “ parochial churches, there are *few* stanzas “ which do not present expressions to excite “ the ridicule of some part of *every* congreg- “ gation. This version might well be *abo- “ lished*, as it exposes one of the *noblest* parts “ of divine service to contempt ; especially “ as there is another version already privi- “ leged, which, though not excellent, is “ however not intolerable.” Thus saith a well-qualified judge ; and indeed it seems,

at present, to be the general opinion of the clergy, that a *selection of proper portions of the psalms* from the *new version*, would answer every purpose required in congregational psalmody.

A plan, never before executed, was suggested to me by the *Rev. George Hay Drummond* (son to the late archbishop of York). He undertook to select *proper portions* of the psalms from the version of *Tate and Brady*, and to arrange them for *every Sunday* throughout the year; also for the principal *festivals* and *fasts*. The adaption of the music was left to my care. In doing this, I reserved the *best* of all the *old* melodies at present used in our churches; but these not being sufficient, either to express *all* the different sentiments or metres used in the version, I composed several new melodies, and was favoured by my friends with some others. Both in the selection, and in the composition of these tunes, the principal object was, neither to be wholly confined to the dry counterpoint of the ancients, nor to accompany the flights of *modern enthusiasts*.

Decorum

Decorum, and an elegant simplicity, were the chief aim in selecting the *melodies*, which are also so easy in their construction, that every person in the church may learn them by the *ear only*. Such a number of tunes is likewise fixed upon, as will include a proper variety, and yet not be too many for the congregation to remember.—Should this selection of music be found worthy to be adopted, it may prove a means of stopping the introduction of more of those tunes into country churches that the congregation are unable to join in, and which, from their complicated composition, and frequently too bad performance, rather tend to dissipate, than heighten devotion.

The use of a proper *portion of the psalms* selected for every Sunday throughout the year, will be productive of many advantages.—By the easy expence of sixpence, the congregation will have no need to seek out in their prayer-books the different, and often distant stanzas, in the psalm that is to be sung. By the purchase of this small book, which may be had of any size, to bind up

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with

with their common prayer-books, if required, they will have a sure guide, to find out the epistle and gospel for the day; nor will they be subjected to sing, or even read, the *improper* words that an ignorant clerk may chuse for them.

In large towns, a reformation in the *performance* of *parochial psalmody* must principally depend upon the *organist*. There can be no doubt, but that most of them will lend their assistance to effect so good a purpose. They must be convinced, that it is impossible for them to do justice to the *sentiments* of the *royal psalmist* by seeing *only the tunes*. In the *selection* before mentioned, not only the *tunes*, but the *words* also, will be placed before them; so it must be their own fault, if they are not correct in the ^{ac-}complish^{ment}: by having recourse to the *words*, and observing where the sentiments vary in different stanzas, they will be enabled to adapt *suitable interludes*, and their attention to this circumstance, will produce new and pleasing effects; but perhaps an example or two may render this matter still clearer. In the first psalm, page 2, in my lately-pub-

published book, to *St. Ann's tune*, are the three following stanzas:—

1. O God of hosts, the mighty Lord,
How lovely is the place
Where thou, enthron'd in glory, shew'st
The brightness of thy face.
2. My longing soul faints with desire,
To view thy blest abode ;
My panting heart and flesh cry out
For thee, the living God.
3. O Lord of hosts, my King and God,
How highly blest are they
Who in thy temple always dwell,
And there thy praise display !

After the *first* stanza, the *second* commencing with these words, “ *My longing soul faints with desire,*” should be introduced by a *plaintive interlude*, in which, if a modulation were dexterously made into the *Minor Mood*, the effect would be increased.—The next *interlude* to introduce the *third* stanza, should be of a more animated cast. In the ninety-sixth psalm, page 19, after the line, “ *Its loud applause the ocean roar,*” the succeeding chorus and interlude should be played on *the full organ*.—The same attention that is here recommended to be paid by the *organist* to the *singing psalms*, is equally necessary in
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the performance of *voluntaries* after the *reading* psalms.—He will find the congregation much pleased, if, after the hundred and fiftieth psalm has been read; he instantly begin his *voluntary* on the *full organ*.—On the contrary, after a *penitential* psalm, the *soft organ* and the *Minor Key*, are extremely proper; and grateful to the ear.

To attain a correct and suitable style in the performance of *voluntaries*, an *organist* should accustom himself, *always* to read the psalms with the congregation. He will then find his mind properly affected and elevated for the purpose.—A neglect of this duty in the *reading psalms*, which originates from his not having the *words* before him while the psalms are *singing*, must of course create many absurdities in his performance.—The little correspondence between the *poetry* and *music* of the interludes, as well as the levity of voluntaries, in our parish churches, no doubt, occasioned these satirical lines from *Mr. Pope*.—

“ Light quirks of music, broken and uneven,

“ Make the soul dance upon a jig to heav’n.”

Nothing here said, it is to be hoped, can
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give offence to able and judicious organists. *Those* to whom these remarks are needless, will excuse the liberty here taken, by considering, that they may be of some use to our *younger brethren* : but surely it is no reflection upon *any* organist to say, that he cannot properly accompany *words*, without he knows them. It would be to expect more from *him* than *Mr. Handel* could do.

To conclude. What has been advanced upon the subject of *psalmody*, it is requested may be candidly received. A reformation in the performance of it is my ardent wish. To effect it, within my narrow compass of action, I have incessantly laboured ; whether to any purpose or no, time must determine.

In regard to my lately published work, "*Si quid novisti, rectius istis, candidus imperti: si non, his utere mecum.*" Whatever happens, my good intention affords a sufficient solace and compensation to my mind, for all the pains it has cost me.—Not attracted by pecuniary reward, I have the satisfaction to find that the *plan* of my work was
 approved

approved by *all*. Happy shall I esteem myself, if the *execution* of it answers the expectation of the greater part. For the *royal patronage*—That of the right reverend *bishops*—The *nobility*—The inferior *clergy*, and the *laity*, I return my grateful acknowledgments. Zealous for an improvement in the performance of an important and noble part of divine worship, I thought it necessary to give a fuller explanation of some advantages that may arise from the use of my book, than I had done in the preface to it: but a consideration of more weight with me than all the rest was, to induce *you*, Reverend Sirs, to believe, that by your sanction and encouragement, a reformation in the performance of *congregational Psalmody* is not only practicable, but easily to be effected.

I am,

REVEREND SIRS,

Your most obliged and grateful servant.

EDWARD MILLER.

Doncaster, January 1791.

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